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# Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

## 6063rd meeting

Thursday, 8 January 2009, 9.15 p.m.
New York

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| *President:* | Mr. Kouchner | (France) |
| *Members:* | Austria | Mr. Mayr-Harting |
| | Burkina Faso | Mr. Kafando |
| | China | Mr. Zhang Yesui |
| | Costa Rica | Mr. Urbina |
| | Croatia | Mr. Jurica |
| | Japan | Mr. Takasu |
| | Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | Mr. Shalgham |
| | Mexico | Mr. Heller |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Yakovenko |
| | Turkey | Mr. Babacan |
| | Uganda | Mr. Butagira |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Miliband |
| | United States of America | Ms. Rice |
| | Viet Nam | Mr. Le Luong Minh |

**Agenda**

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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09-20414 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 9.15 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Egypt, Israel and Saudi Arabia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, and His Royal Highness Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia.

In accordance with the request made in a letter dated 8 January 2009 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, to be issued as document S/2009/24, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the present meeting in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I welcome the presence of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, at this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2009/23, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of France.

Despite the difficulties, we are meeting in the Security Council for the joint purpose of achieving a ceasefire. The draft resolution that has been submitted is commensurate with the very grave situation in the Middle East today. The mobilization of the Council and of such a large number of ministers from the region attest to that.

Gaza is facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. The toll of the violence has been extremely heavy. Our thoughts tonight are with many victims of this tragedy and with the bereaved families on both sides. The immediate cessation of the fighting is the overriding priority.

Like many others here, the European Union, France and President Sarkozy have worked continuously for the past 10 days to find a way out of this situation.

We do not place States on the same level — and of course I am referring to the State of Israel as well as to the Palestinian State that we so desire — as movements whose sole ambition is to destroy the peace process through violence.

The draft resolution includes the framework principles for a way out of the crisis, namely, an end to the launching of rockets and to Israeli military operations and a permanent ceasefire, which includes in particular the opening of crossing points and effective measures against weapons trafficking. European Union ministers proposed that framework at their meeting in Paris on 30 December. The President of the French Republic negotiated it with the States of the region during his visit to the Middle East. Following that initiative, President Mubarak proposed a peace plan to which the leaders of the region responded positively. That plan provides us with the sole viable way out of the crisis and the only hope for peace. We are pleased that the draft resolution encourages those efforts. The ongoing contacts between the Israelis and the Egyptians give us a measure of hope.

Tonight, as a country that has always advocated the essential role in the Middle East of the United Nations and the Security Council, we have but one regret, namely, that, despite our persistent calls, it has not been possible for the Council to find a bit more time to consider the points of view of the negotiators on the ground and to endorse the results of the negotiations under way to achieve a permanent ceasefire. That message of hope must be heard without delay. The ongoing negotiations to which I have referred must be concluded very quickly. Peace is essential.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2009/23.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour:*

Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mexico, Russian Federation, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Viet Nam

*Against:*

None

*Abstaining:*

United States of America

**The President** (*spoke in French*): The result of the voting is as follows: 14 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 1860 (2009).

I now give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

**The Secretary-General**: For the past two weeks, people around the world have observed with grief and horror the escalating violence and suffering in Gaza and southern Israel and have looked to the United Nations to put an end to the fighting. I am heartened and relieved at the adoption by the Council today of a resolution to bring an end to that tragic situation. The Council's decision signals the will of the international community. It must be fully respected by all parties to this conflict.

The resolution calls for an immediate and durable ceasefire in and from Gaza. That will open the way for the United Nations to resume urgently the delivery of humanitarian aid, food and medical supplies. All parties in Israel and Gaza will need to respect that humanitarian effort.

We also need to turn quickly to the process of rebuilding what has been destroyed in the fighting. The United Nations stands ready to assist in and support that process.

An immediate and durable ceasefire is the first step. However, we also all know that more will be needed and that a political way forward is required to deliver long-term security and peace.

My visit to the region next week will focus on helping to ensure that the ceasefire is implemented and that urgent humanitarian assistance reaches those in need and on encouraging the diplomatic efforts currently under way.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I shall now give the floor to members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. David Miliband, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Miliband** (United Kingdom): Let me, first of all, Sir, start by praising your presidential efforts over the past three days to bring us together, as well as those of the President of France for all that he has been attempting to do to bring forward the goals that we seek together.

We have been brought together over the past three days first by the gravity of the situation that currently exists in Gaza. Statistics do not do justice to the situation there, but the word "crisis", which is sometimes overused, is wholly appropriate, in my view, in that context. However, we have also been brought together, I believe, by clarity of vision for the future. The only way to secure dignity and security for Israelis and Palestinians alike is for that dignity and security to be for both of them.

The heart of this resolution, I believe, shows a genuine consensus on a clear set of objectives. The first is an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire. The wording of the resolution is clear on that

point. The second is the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people in Gaza — in the short-term through increased aid and then through the opening of crossings, as per the 2005 Agreement. The third, the security needs of Israelis, needs to be tackled through the new measures on the illegal trafficking of arms. The fourth is the political needs of Israelis and Palestinians alike for a strong Palestinian Authority, speaking for all Palestinians and negotiating in good faith with Israel for the only solution to the conflict in the Middle East: the two-State solution.

I believe that, tonight, the United Nations has served its purpose of speaking loudly, clearly, authoritatively and unequivocally. But we all have further responsibilities: responsibilities for the parties on the ground, responsibilities for regional States — some of which, such as Egypt, are working so hard on the practical measures that are now essential — and responsibilities, too, for the whole international community, because this crisis in the Middle East affects us all and that is why it belongs in the Security Council.

I said on Tuesday that our responsibility was to chart a course back to resolution 1850 (2008). Today, I believe we can do so with the route map set out in resolution 1860 (2009) — not as a substitute for the decisions that need to be made on the ground, but as a complement to them. Our job is to turn the words of the resolution into reality, and that is a task to which the United Kingdom will remain wholly committed. To that extent, our work does not finish; it must carry on with renewed vigour.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I call on Her Excellency Ms. Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State of the United States of America.

**Ms. Rice** (United States of America): I am pleased to join the members of the Council for this important discussion tonight. It is obviously a very serious situation in Gaza. And while our goal must be the stabilization and normalization of Gaza through the implementation of a durable and fully respected ceasefire and an end to all terrorist activities, I think that resolution 1860 (2009) shows that the Council and the United Nations are indeed seized of the matter.

The resolution is a step towards our goals. It reflects the international community's concern about the circumstances in Gaza and its desire for a sustainable peace in Gaza.

I want especially to note that, while much work remains to be done, there is important work under way. In that regard, the work of Egyptian President Mubarak in the mediation efforts of Egypt are to be not just applauded, but supported. I believe that it is those efforts that will ultimately help to lead to a durable ceasefire, and that will lead not only to a durable ceasefire but to a sustainable peace in Gaza, and we must all support the Egyptian efforts.

Obviously, there are many tasks to be done to root out the causes of the hostilities, including dealing with the provision of rockets and the smuggling of weapons, securing the borders so that we can lay the basis for the reopening of crossings based on the principles of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access, and providing security for the Israeli people and a better life for the people of Gaza.

We must establish an international consensus that Gaza must never again be used as a launching pad for rockets against Israeli citizens, because it is important to remember how this crisis began. Violence in Gaza was instigated by Hamas, a terrorist group that has called for the destruction of Israel. Eighteen months ago, Hamas took over the Gaza Strip in a coup and since then thousands of guns, rockets and mortars have been smuggled into Gaza. Hamas refused to extend the *tahdiya*, and continued armament is a root cause of the current situation and has gravely endangered the residents of both Gaza and southern Israel. Hamas's commitment to violence is an attack not only on Israel, but also on the two-State solution.

We require principled resolution of the situation in Gaza, and the resolution that we have adopted tonight in fact gives us a basis on which to do this.

Of course, it is not just a matter of resolving the situation on the ground. There will need to be a principled resolution also of the political challenges in Gaza that re-establishes the Palestinian Authority's control, including over borders, and facilitates the normal operation of the Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings, as the resolution recognizes, and in time, the opening of other crossings.

And we support President Abbas as he carries out his responsibilities both with respect to governance and in negotiations to establish a State of Palestine. Regional States have previously recognized the importance of this, notably in the 26 November Arab League resolution.

As we strive for a sustainable ceasefire, the United States remains deeply concerned about the innocent Palestinians who are suffering in Gaza, and the United States will undertake, maintain and continue the humanitarian efforts that we are making to support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the non-governmental organizations that are working there.

Let me say, too, that the United States recognizes the right of Israel, like other States, to exercise its right of self-defence, and we have said to Israel that it is obligated to take feasible steps to minimize the impact of any actions on civilians. I want to remind the Council also that Hamas continues to hold Israel Defense Forces soldier Gilad Shalit, and he must be released.

Finally, let me just note that, while we are dealing with the current situation in Gaza, we must keep our eye on the goal of resolution 1850 (2008), which we adopted in this Chamber a short time ago. That is the goal of establishing an enduring commitment to mutual recognition; freedom from violence, incitement and terror; and a two-State solution, building upon previous agreements and obligations. All United Nations Member States bear a responsibility to promote these principles and to help the parties towards the establishment of a State of Palestine to live in peace, side by side with the State of Israel.

The United States thought it important to see the outcomes of the Egyptian mediation efforts in order to see what resolution 1860 (2009) might have been supporting, and that is why we chose to abstain tonight. But after a great deal of consideration, we decided that the resolution — the text of which we support, the goals of which we support and the objectives of which we fully support — should indeed be allowed to go forward. I believe that, in doing so, the Council has provided a road map for a sustainable, durable peace in Gaza.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I call on His Excellency Mr. Abdurrahman Mohamed Shalgham, Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

**Mr. Shalgham** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Before the hundreds of people being killed every day in Gaza; the thousands being wounded; the total destruction by naval, air and ground bombardment; and the long-standing siege of our people in Gaza, we have sought urgently to put an end to the Israeli aggression, lift the siege and provide the Palestinian people with humanitarian assistance, medicines and food. To that end, we submitted an Arab draft resolution and stepped up our contacts with the members of the Security Council in order to mobilize support for it. In that respect, we thank those member States that responded positively to our efforts.

After several meetings and lengthy discussions with the United States of America, France, the United Kingdom and Arab ministers currently present at the United Nations, we formulated a draft resolution, submitted by the United Kingdom, that the Arab Group believes to meet our minimum requirements, including an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal of the Israeli forces of aggression, the opening of the crossing points and guarantees for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. We therefore voted in favour of resolution 1860 (2009).

We believe, however, that the situation on the ground in Gaza requires a speedier response and a stronger resolution commensurate with the scope of the tragedy. Although we do not agree with some of its provisions, we voted in favour of the draft resolution.

Beyond this tragedy, another tragedy exists today: that of the 11,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, some of them elected members of the Legislative Council. Yet we hear unending talk about one Israeli prisoner, a soldier; just one soldier compared to 11,000 civilians, including children, women and members of parliament. Yet nobody defends them.

But the important and urgent thing now is to implement the provisions of the present resolution in such a way as to put an end to the Israeli massacre in Gaza and to halt the Israeli destruction machine. Working to ensure the implementation of this resolution will be a test for us and our credibility. It will also be a test for peace. This Israeli crime must not continue.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ali Babacan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

**Mr. Babacan** (Turkey): After three days of negotiations, we finally managed to reach agreement on the resolution just adopted. We may not be fully satisfied with the text before us, but, after all, it is a

compromise representing the will of the Security Council. Therefore, I thank everyone who made this possible.

The crucial task for the Security Council at this stage was to make a strong appeal to stop the bloodshed and halt all military activities. The resolution we have just adopted achieves this, with its clear call for an immediate ceasefire and a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza. The unequivocal call for unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza and the emphasis on the sustained and regular flow of goods and people to Gaza are equally important and strong messages of this resolution. This is in fact a call for the lifting of the blockade in all aspects.

Now, of course, we have to focus on the immediate implementation of the terms of this resolution, without any delay. Full and effective implementation of this resolution is a must in order to put an end to this tragedy and to the suffering of the people of Gaza. Right after the ceasefire, it will be vital to concentrate our efforts on the national reconciliation of Palestinians.

For its part, Turkey will exert every effort for the implementation of all aspects of this resolution. We will continue to work with our friends and partners in the region and beyond to secure lasting calm and stability in the region.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the need to have a viable and comprehensive peace on all tracks of the Middle East peace process. Turkey will lend its full support to all endeavours in that direction.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Alexander Yakovenko, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Yakovenko** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation supported the adoption of the present resolution, guided by Russia's fundamental position in favour of an immediate end, by all parties, to hostilities and a resumption of full-fledged diplomatic processes aimed at finding a comprehensive and lasting solution to the many problems regarding Gaza. We welcome the fact that, as a result of collective efforts by members of the Security Council and Arab delegations, we have been able to adopt a balanced and, we hope, effective solution.

We continue to believe that the situation in and around Gaza cannot be resolved by the use of force or hostilities in the region — which can only exacerbate a situation which is already unbearable for civilians in the Gaza Strip. The fact that all members of the Council have come out in favour of a durable ceasefire in Gaza does not mean that our work is done. It is important to support efforts by various parties, including Russia, aimed at overcoming the crisis in and around Gaza.

In conclusion, I reaffirm that developments in recent hours have underscored the need for an immediate response by Security Council members to the crisis in the region. We strongly urge the parties to heed the views expressed by the Security Council.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

**Mr. Urbina** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): As we said only two days ago, resolution 1850 (2008) and the President's statement to the press of 28 December 2008 (see press release SC/9559) were not sufficient to halt the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian situation and the escalation of violence and their appalling consequences for the civilian population of the Gaza Strip. Nor were they sufficient to ease the fear experienced by the Israeli population because of the launching of rockets into their territory by Palestinian factions, including Hamas militants.

Today, after much apprehension and travail, the Council has adopted a resolution which, while not having received all the necessary political support, has tremendous moral force. The Council has adopted a resolution calling on the parties to the conflict to bring about an immediate cessation of hostilities. The resolution unequivocally reflects the overwhelming resolve of the international community, which has followed the work of the Council with great attention.

It is appropriate now to underscore the legally binding nature of this resolution. Compliance by all parties to the conflict is mandatory. The parties must understand clearly that failure to comply could, and should, entail serious consequences.

My delegation has advocated that the Security Council should make an active contribution to peace in the Middle East. Today, I believe that we are

contributing to the attainment of that lofty goal. We harbour the hope that the Council will also be consistent with the decision it has taken today and that it will use its authority in order to ensure respect for that decision.

I hardly need say that my delegation will work with all other members of the Council to make an effective contribution to peace and well-being for all inhabitants of the Middle East.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

**Mr. Takasu** (Japan): Japan was pleased to join in the adoption of resolution 1860 (2009), which we believe will contribute to the cessation of violence in and around the Gaza Strip. We consider it important that the Security Council was able to discharge its heavy responsibility by taking, with the broadest political support, a formal decision on the grave and serious situation in Gaza, after intensive consultations over the past few days.

We applaud in particular the tireless efforts and leadership of Arab foreign ministers and the foreign ministers of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, which made it possible to achieve this important outcome.

The resolution above all stresses the urgency of the situation and calls for an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire. It also calls for the unimpeded provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance.

In the meantime, we were shocked to hear today about a tragic incident — an attack against a United Nations vehicle, killing United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) contract workers and injuring others and forcing UNRWA to suspend its operations. We extend our deepest condolences to their families.

This incident, along with other similar incidents, underlines the need for the ceasefire to be put in place immediately and permanently. The calls for a ceasefire, humanitarian assistance and intensified efforts for arrangements and guarantees for a ceasefire in Gaza, as contained in the resolution, must be heeded and implemented immediately and faithfully by all concerned in order to stop the cycle of violence and restore calm, normalcy and safe living conditions in and around Gaza.

Japan hopes that this resolution will help create conditions to renew efforts for putting the peace process back on track, in accordance with the principles laid out in resolution 1850 (2008) to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Mexico.

**Mr. Heller** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Faced with the tragic developments in the Gaza Strip since December, which have caused destruction, distress and many deaths, in particular among the civilian population, the Security Council, being charged with the maintenance of international peace and security, has an obligation to act and to contribute to an end to hostilities and to re-establishing calm in the region. It is finally doing so tonight.

Over the past three days, the Security Council, with the vital assistance of Arab countries and their ministers, who are represented here, has undertaken substantial efforts to achieve the best possible agreement in order to bring about an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire, humanitarian access to the area and the optimum conditions for a return to the peace process.

Mexico has emphatically stressed the need for the action of the Security Council to be expressed in the most united fashion possible. Mexico therefore decided to support the adoption of resolution 1860 (2009), which was negotiated through intensive consultations in the expectation that its provisions would be applied immediately on the ground.

The resolution that has been adopted has its merits. It promotes, in a balanced manner, the conditions for a durable ceasefire, allows for unrestricted humanitarian access through the establishment of corridors for the delivery of assistance and seeks the resumption of negotiations as the only possible way to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is a question not of going back to the immediate past, but of building the best possible foundation for the future.

However, my delegation would have preferred the resolution that we have just adopted to incorporate an explicit reference to the importance of respecting the provisions of international humanitarian law. Likewise, we should have liked to see a direct reference in the text to the establishment of an international mechanism

for monitoring all measures to be agreed upon in the context of the diplomatic negotiations under way.

The United Nations through the Security Council, needs to endorse that process and continue to promote its further development and ensure its rigorous implementation. By adopting this resolution with a view to the future, the Security Council has fully shouldered its responsibilities and manifested its support for the need to resume the peace process so as to bring about the establishment of a Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel in peace, within secure and recognized borders, in accordance with resolution 1850 (2008).

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of China.

**Mr. Zhang Yesui** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We wish to thank the parties concerned for their tireless efforts to reach a consensus on the text of resolution 1860 (2009). Since the outbreak of the conflict, we have consistently supported swift action by the Council to adopt a resolution urging the parties concerned to bring about an immediate ceasefire, open border crossings and ease the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

While we believe that the resolution we adopted this evening is not totally satisfactory, we nevertheless voted in favour, given the gravity and urgency of developments on the ground. The resolution reflects the shared expectations and common aspirations of the international community.

We urge the parties concerned to achieve an immediate ceasefire and to implement the resolution in a comprehensive and effective manner so as to avoid causing more civilian casualties and a humanitarian crisis. We hope the international community will work to bring the parties concerned back to the track of negotiations and to achieve a just and durable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian question.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Uganda.

**Mr. Butagira** (Uganda): Uganda voted in favour of the resolution because of the urgency of the need to put an end to the hostilities and to the humanitarian tragedy. We believe that the resolution is balanced and provides for an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire, the protection of civilians and humanitarian access.

During the past few days, Uganda has called for the Council to maintain its unity, and today's outcome reflects a consensus resolution, which is an indication that the Council is aware of its important responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Recent developments are a reminder that the Council should remain fully engaged in seeking a comprehensive peace in the Middle East through the two-State solution, with Palestine and Israel living in peace with one another. Finally, we urge the parties involved to move very quickly to implement the provisions of this resolution.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam.

**Mr. Le Luong Minh** (Viet Nam): My delegation would like to have seen a resolution with more clear-cut language, providing for an immediate ceasefire and an immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, which we consider essential for putting an early end to the current crisis and relieving the innocent Palestinian people of their suffering and numerous hardships.

However, we are aware of the urgency of the situation and the urgent need for action by the Council in the face of the continuously deteriorating situation, especially the humanitarian situation on the ground. We also note that the resolution we have just adopted does contain measures that are comprehensive and balanced and that, if implemented with good faith, would contribute to the resolution of the ongoing crisis and restore or otherwise create conditions conducive to bringing the Middle East peace process back on track towards a lasting solution based on the existence of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace, with secure and recognized borders, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Therefore, Viet Nam decided to support and vote in favour of resolution 1860 (2009). We look forward to contributing to efforts to ensure its effective implementation.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Burkina Faso.

**Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the Security Council's adoption of resolution 1860 (2009) regarding the present serious situation in the Middle East.

The Council could not remain indifferent to the tragedy under way in Gaza, especially in the light of its

mandate, but also of the serious humanitarian consequences. We believe that the Council should have acted earlier, but, as the expression goes, better late than never. That is why we joined the consensus, which reflects the will of the Security Council to contribute to putting an end to the suffering of the civilian population. We feel that the message could have been more clearly articulated, but we also know that the sense of urgency required compromise. Now, we need to do our utmost to ensure effective implementation of this important resolution.

We would like once again to welcome the spirit of compromise and the sense of responsibility demonstrated by various parties, in particular the Group of Arab States. We hope that the resolution we have just adopted will contribute to the success of other initiatives under way, ultimately achieving a lasting political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

From that standpoint, we would like to express our support for and encouragement of the Secretary-General, who has proposed to visit the region next week.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

**Mr. Mayr-Harting** (Austria): Austria believes that there was an urgent need for this formal call by the Council for an immediate, permanent and fully respected ceasefire. We also believe that it was essential to preserve the unity of the Council regarding this important matter that is of concern to the entire world. We therefore are grateful for the efforts undertaken, in particular by the United Kingdom, France, the United States, Libya and the group of Arab countries represented here, which made this consensus possible.

There must be an unconditional halt to all rocket attacks out of Gaza on Israel, as well as to all military action by Israel in Gaza. For this reason, Austria believes that today's decision must be followed up as rapidly as possible by the establishment of the guarantees and arrangements mentioned in today's resolution. We actively support the international efforts under way to make this possible.

Another priority is the lasting and sustained opening of the border crossings so that we can come to grips with the ever more desperate humanitarian situation affecting the population in Gaza.

Finally, like Mexico, Austria would draw the Council's attention to one point not explicitly mentioned in today's resolution but that is of key importance: the obligation of all parties to respect human rights law and humanitarian law. The developments of recent days and of today in particular have shown how important that is.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

**Mr. Jurica** (Croatia): Let me begin by expressing our appreciation for all efforts to come up with a clear Council response to the situation in Gaza. We commend the intense personal engagement of the ministers, which has made it possible to adopt this important resolution, which has our full support. The resolution reflects a number of substantive messages that have emerged from the thorough diplomatic engagement in New York and in the region over the past days.

In view of the ongoing conflict, an immediate, permanent and effective ceasefire is a necessity — a ceasefire that will be credible and implemented by all, one that will eradicate conditions that have led to the current state of escalation and will end both the suffering and deprivation in Gaza and the persistent terrorist threat under which the population of southern Israel lives. It is important that it does not allow for the return to the status quo. Only if the conditions on the ground are such that they can guarantee a ceasefire that will be fully respected by both sides, that Israel can be assured that its population will not be exposed to the continuing terror of rocket attacks and that weapons smuggling by Hamas will not be tolerated can we hope to have a sustainable solution to the crisis. In the interest of a lasting state of calm, it is imperative that there be confidence in the mechanisms on the ground. As intense diplomatic activity in the region continues, let me reiterate our support for the efforts that Egypt and others are investing in the process.

Finally, I would like to reiterate Croatia's belief that political dialogue is the only way to achieve a lasting peace based on a two-State solution. It is essential that the Council remain guided by the objectives reaffirmed by resolution 1850 (2008) in its efforts to find a solution to this unfolding crisis.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Riyad al-Malki, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian National Authority.

**Mr. Al-Malki** (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): The adoption of resolution 1860 (2009) was delayed several days despite the humanitarian crisis and the appalling loss of lives among civilians in Gaza. More than 760 Palestinian martyrs have fallen, 40 per cent of them women and children. More than 3,000 persons have been wounded, and vast damage has been done to the basic infrastructure in the district, including United Nations installations, in flagrant breach of international humanitarian law.

After days-long consultations to reach this binding resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire, Israel must now put an end to its aggression against the Palestinian people and fully withdraw Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip. The resolution calls for the lifting of the blockade and the opening of the crossings in accordance with the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access, and calls for guarantees ensuring the sustained opening of those crossings.

In that regard, we would like to express our thanks to all our Arab brethren in the Arab Ministerial Council, chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Saud Al-Faisal, for their principled and united position. This played a fundamental role in achieving, together with friendly countries, the adoption of the resolution.

Now Israel, the occupying Power, must immediately implement this resolution. Aggression must cease so that we all may have the opportunity to work to heal our people's wounds and to rebuild what the brutal Israeli war machine has destroyed in Gaza.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now invite His Royal Highness Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, to take the floor.

**Prince Al-Faisal** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Today raises our hopes for a new path in the work of the Security Council. The Security Council has shouldered its responsibility to put an end to the tragedy taking place in Gaza. It is our hope that the step taken this evening will pave the way to resolving it. By adopting resolution 1860 (2009), the Security Council is restoring confidence in the machinery of peacemaking. We hope that all parties will see this as an achievement for international peace and security and that it will serve as a model for addressing any future crises that may arise. However, the real joy is not what we have achieved here but that which will be felt in Gaza, where it is hoped that our achievement today will save many human lives.

We must always remember that the Security Council has served the people, alleviated their suffering and contributed to their well-being, and that it is not a device to be manipulated by States. What the Security Council achieved today is the result of the efforts and goodwill of all participants. Yet, when we recall the high cost and the loss of human lives, it limits our sense of pride in this accomplishment. Success always has a price and in this case it was a little too high. Thus, we hope that this achievement will be blessed and built upon.

In conclusion, we hope that all parties will abide by the resolution so that we can build a durable and just settlement to a conflict that has bedevilled the Middle East and cost it heavily for so long.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt.

**Mr. Aboul Gheit** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to express our deep thanks and gratitude to you — my friend, Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner — and your friendly country for the efforts that you have undertaken. I would like to say that we are truly and completely satisfied and reassured that the Council has finally succeeded in adopting this resolution.

President Mubarak initiated steps by assuming Egypt's historical responsibilities towards the Palestinian question and by offering a comprehensive road map three days ago to settle the situation in Gaza. Today's resolution welcomes that initiative, which was submitted at Sharm El-Sheikh in the presence of the French President, Mr. Sarkozy. President Mubarak personally welcomes the resolution that we have adopted today. We believe that it offers significant and crucial support for the Egyptian effort. The people of Egypt and other Arab peoples, who are closely following today's important development hope that the Council will ensure the immediate implementation of the resolution in order to avoid further bloodshed and the killing of innocent civilians.

In thanking the Council and its members, we would particularly like to thank His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom

and Government and delegation, who worked tirelessly and sincerely with us from the very beginning and provided a proposal that constituted the basis on which we reached the resolution that we have adopted tonight.

Egypt, which is mentioned twice in the resolution, assures the Council that it will spare no effort, working with all the sincerity that our brothers, the Palestinians, and the international community have witnessed in our dealings with all parties to restore calm and to provide the necessary environment for the peace process to continue, so as to establish a Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital, as it makes every possible effort to restore the unity of the Palestinian people and to achieve Palestinian national reconciliation. I wish to underscore that all Palestinians, for all their political differences, are part of the same intrinsic whole. They have one cause, one just cause, and Egypt will make every effort to bridge the gaps between them so as to achieve the supreme Palestinian interest.

Finally, let us establish an immediate ceasefire and Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. Let us alleviate the suffering of the people of Gaza, put an end to the blockade and implement the resolution as soon as possible, in such a way as to restore the *tahdiya* to the Gaza Strip and open the way for the reconciliation that we began to work for a month ago.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Israel.

**Ms. Shalev** (Israel): In 2005, when Israel left Gaza, we hoped that we would never have to return. But eight years of continuous rocket attacks by the Hamas terrorist organization, Hamas' refusal to extend the period of calm and its smuggling of weapons during that period left Israel with no choice but to act in self-defence.

Responsibility for the current hostilities lies squarely with Hamas. The international community must focus its attention on the cessation of Hamas' terrorist activity and make it clear that a terrorist organization can never be a legitimate leadership.

The past eight years of terror and the period of so-called calm have taught us that any arrangement must be fully respected and secured, including the total cessation of rocket fire and smuggling, in order to be durable and to allow the possibility of lasting peace.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 10.15 p.m.*